

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Original): A ferrule comprising plural groups of fiber holes for insertion of optical fibers formed at predetermined intervals, each group having a plurality of fiber holes, each fiber hole having a guide hole portion and a minute hole portion whose inside diameter is smaller than that of said guide hole portion, said guide hole portion having a taper portion formed on a minute hole portion side in such a way that said taper portion is tapered toward said minute hole portion and has a length L_t set to $1 \geq L_t/L_g \geq 1/3$ where L_g is a total length of said guide hole portion.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A ferrule of claim ~~7~~ 4, wherein said guide hole portion being formed in such a way that said inside diameter thereof becomes smaller in a stepwise manner toward said minute hole portion.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A ferrule of claim ~~7~~ 4, wherein said guide hole portion being formed in such a way that said inside diameter thereof becomes smaller continuously toward said minute hole portion.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]]~~ The ferrule of Claim 4, further comprising:
pin holes for insertion of guide pins;

an opening which communicates with said ~~plurality~~ plural groups of fiber holes and through which an adhesive for securely adhering said optical fibers in said fiber holes is injected; ~~and~~ wherein

said plural groups of fiber holes are arranged in plural rows of fiber holes for insertion of optical fibers formed at predetermined intervals, each row having a subset of said plurality of fiber holes formed between said pin holes, wherein,

each fiber hole having a the guide hole portion of a minute hole portion with said minute hole portion whose inside diameter is smaller than that of said guide hole portion.